

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-39 are presently pending in this application, Claims 19-39 having been withdrawn from further consideration by the Examiner, and Claims 1-3, 6, 14, 15 and 18 having been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the abstract of the disclosure and the drawings were objected to because of informalities; Claims 1-3, 15 and 18 were objected to for informalities; and Claims 1-6 and 15-17 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 1-6 and 15-17 of U.S. Patent 6,516,179. However, Claims 7-14 were indicated as including allowable subject matter.

First, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that Claims 7-14 include allowable subject matter. However, Claims 7-14 are presently maintained in dependent form, because Applicant believes that Claim 1 includes allowable subject matter.

In response to the objection to the abstract of the disclosure, a new abstract is submitted herewith.

With regard to the objection to the drawings, Applicant respectfully submits that, for example, Figs. 4 and 5 of the present application show a restriction point 22a and a free end 22b, and that the leading edge and trailing edge of a sheet 100 are guided by the free end 22b, while the other portions of the sheet 100 are guided by the restriction point 22a. Therefore, the drawings of the present application are believed to show the “first restricting portion, which restricts an image transfer side of said recording medium, other than opposite ends in a direction of conveyance” recited in Claim 18.

In response to the objection to the claims, Claims 1-3, 6, 14, 15 and 18 have been amended to correct the noted informalities and clarify the subject matter recited therein. Thus, Claims 1-3, 6, 14, 15 and 18 are believed to be in compliance with the requirements of the statute. Also, the amendments to Claims 1-3, 6, 14, 15 and 18 are merely cosmetic and thus not believed to narrow the scopes of the claims. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

With regard to the rejections under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 1-6 and 15-17 of U.S. Patent No. 6,516,179, submitted herewith is a terminal disclaimer to overcome these rejections. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections based on U.S. Patent No. 6,516,179 be withdrawn.

In light of the prior indication of allowable subject matter and in view of the amendments and discussions presented above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding, and thus the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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